

## Love Our High Streets Bedminster Commercial Vacant Property Grant Scheme – Guidance Notes

### Background

Bedminster Business Improvement District are administering a grant scheme to regenerate vacant commercial spaces in Bedminster – specifically Cannon Street, East Street and Bedminster Parade. A particular focus will be on bringing new types of businesses into the area, thereby strengthening and diversifying its current high street offer. The grant scheme is funded by the West of England Combined Authority through its Love our High Streets project.

Applications will be assessed on merit, job creation, the applicant's total investment into the business and on a first come first served basis. These guidance notes are provided to help you understand the aims of the grant scheme and how you can make a grant application.

We reserve the right to change the terms and nature of this grant scheme at any time without notice. The fund is limited and so applications will be considered on a *first come first served* basis. The decision of the BID is final and we reserve the right to change the terms and conditions at any time without notice.

### Who can apply/eligibility

The grant scheme is open to small or micro property owners/leaseholders and small or micro new businesses/occupiers/tenants of commercial premises within the area of Bedminster town centre that includes East Street, Bedminster Parade, and Canon Street. A small or micro business is defined as one that has less than 50 employees and a turnover and balance sheet of less than £8.2m.

Eligible small or micro new businesses/occupiers/tenants of previously vacant commercial premises can apply for grants ranging from £3,000 to £10,000 (inclusive of VAT) and will be dependent on length of lease agreement and must have the building owners' prior approval for any works. Charities may also apply.

Small or micro property owners/leaseholders can apply for a maximum grant of £10,000 (inclusive of VAT).

- Grants of £3,000 are available for lease agreements for between 6 and 12 months
- Grants of £6,000 are available for leases agreements for a minimum of 2 years
- Grants of £10,000 are available for leases agreements for a minimum of 3 years

Only businesses who have not received more than 200,000 euros worth of public investment in the past three years (EU State Aid compliance) are eligible for this grant.

In the interests of diversifying the centre's offer some businesses will not be eligible to access the Scheme. As an example, these include; Betting shops, Pawn brokers, Charity shops, Tanning salons, Amusement arcades, Shops/venues wholly or mainly offering material of an adult or sexual nature & some class A5 takeaways. This list is not exclusive and we retain the right to add to it as the balance of the centre offer changes over time.

### What does the grant cover?

- Works to the street-facing elevation/s of the building and interior refurbishment works will be the main consideration for funding
- We encourage businesses to provide improvements to accessibility and assist visitors with disabilities, where possible
- For new businesses/occupiers/tenants up to 50% of the funding can contribute towards set up costs and year 1 overheads
- The scheme does not support works which have already been undertaken or any works which are started prior to a formal offer of grant funding being made

Please note that grants are discretionary and subject to availability of funds. The inclusion of a building within an eligible area does not give automatic entitlement to a grant.

### Do I need Planning Permission?

Planning permission is required for works that involve a material change to the external appearance of a shop or building. Such works include alterations to the fascia, the windows or the doorway, changes to the materials used or the installation of awnings, blinds or security shutters.

Advertisement consent is required for the display of certain types of signs.

Bristol City Council is doing all it can to facilitate this project, please contact Sarah Morrison at [sarah.morrison@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.morrison@bristol.gov.uk) for more information. For general planning enquiries email: [development.management@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:development.management@bristol.gov.uk), telephone: 0117 922 3000 or visit [www.bristol.gov.uk/page/planning-and-building-regulations/planning-applications-and-process](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/planning-and-building-regulations/planning-applications-and-process)

### How do I apply?

Please see the separate application form which requires:

- Proof of ownership/lease – if you do not own the property you will need to provide proof that you have permission from the owner to carry out the works
- A business plan (we are flexible about the approach you use but brevity will be rewarded)
- Any available visuals of what it will look like following the work
- Details of any necessary permissions or confirmation that there are none that are required
- Your expression of interest and documents should be sent by email to George Grace at [business@bedminster.org.uk](mailto:business@bedminster.org.uk)

### How is the decision made?

- Applications are considered by a small panel made-up of representatives from Bedminster Business Improvement District and Bristol City Council
- If your application is eligible and you have provided all the required documents you will be invited to a meeting with a representative from the panel to discuss your application
- Successful applicants will receive an offer letter and grant agreement which must be signed and returned within 14 days from the date of offer, or the grant offer may be withdrawn.
- Any grant awarded will be paid in stages; this will be discussed with the applicant at the meeting with the panel representative, however preference will be given to applicants investing their own money also and/or for expenses already incurred
- In some instances, we will make a conditional or a grant award in principle prior to planning consent and will issue a formal grant offer letter as soon as permission is granted. The scheme operates independently of the planning process and any offer of a grant does not imply that planning consent will be granted
- Bedminster Business Improvement District reserves the right to withhold grant payments if works are not completed within agreed timeframes
- Successful applicants will be required to allow Bedminster Business Improvement District and Bristol City Council to fully publicise details of the grant and works that it has funded as part of its promotional activity for the scheme. This may include photographs of the applicant, internal and external photographs and a quote from the applicant on how the grant scheme has helped the
- Bedminster Business Improvement District reserve the right to claw back financial assistance if the grant agreement conditions are breached.

### About Bedminster Business Improvement District (BID)

Bedminster BID is a partnership representing 350 businesses in the area with the purpose of protecting and ensuring the future of the local retail streets. It is run by a voluntary board of directors drawn from local businesses and has a small part-time staff running this and other marketing, promotion and street enhancement projects.

More information may be found at [www.bedminster.org.uk/business](http://www.bedminster.org.uk/business), [business@bedminster.org.uk](mailto:business@bedminster.org.uk) or call George Grace on 07801790645.